

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 1, 2011

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 FIRST EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 13

**Introduced by Assembly Members V. Manuel Pérez, Bradford, and
Skinner**
(Coauthor: Assembly Member John A. Pérez)

February 7, 2011

An act to amend Sections 2069 and 2099 of, and to add Sections 2099.10 and 2840 to, the Fish and Game Code, and to amend Section 25524 of, *and to add Section 25619 to, and to add and repeal Sections 21081.8 and 21097.6 of,* the Public Resources Code, relating to renewable energy resources, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 13, as amended, V. Manuel Pérez. Energy: renewable resources: endangered species: environmental impact reports.

(1) The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) requires the Fish and Game Commission to establish a list of endangered species and a list of threatened species, and requires the Department of Fish and Game to recommend, and the commission to adopt, criteria for determining if a species is endangered or threatened. CESA authorizes the department to authorize the take of threatened species, endangered species, or candidate species by permit if certain requirements are met. CESA authorizes the department, in consultation with the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (Energy Commission) and, to the extent practicable, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management, to design and implement actions to protect, restore, or enhance the habitat of plants and wildlife that can be used to fully mitigate the

impacts of the take of endangered, threatened, or candidate species (mitigation actions) resulting from certain solar thermal and photovoltaic powerplants in the planning area of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

This bill additionally would authorize the department to design and implement these mitigation actions for proposed wind and geothermal powerplants in the planning area subject to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

(2) Existing law requires the department to collect, and requires the owner or developer of an eligible project to pay, a one-time permit application fee of \$75,000 to the department for deposit into the Fish and Game Preservation Fund. Existing law requires the department to utilize the permit application fee to pay for all or a portion of the department's cost of processing incidental take permit applications pursuant to CESA.

This bill would additionally require the department to collect, and an owner or developer of an eligible project to pay, a one-time permit application fee of \$75,000 to the department for deposit into the Fish and Game Preservation Fund, to pay for all or a portion of the department's cost of processing incidental take permit applications. The bill would define "eligible project" to mean an eligible renewable energy resource, as defined in the California renewables portfolio standard program. If the permit application fee is insufficient to complete permitting work due to the complexity of a project or timeline delays, the bill would authorize the department to collect an additional fee from the owner or developer to pay for its actual costs, not to exceed an additional \$75,000. *The bill would limit the fee collected by the department, if the department's cost of processing an incidental take permit application is limited to activities relating to a consistency determination, to an amount that does not exceed the anticipated full costs to the department for those activities.*

Existing law establishes the Renewable Energy Resources Development Fee Trust Fund as a continuously appropriated fund in the State Treasury to serve, and be managed, as an optional, voluntary method for developers or owners of eligible projects, as defined, to deposit fees sufficient to complete mitigation actions established by the department and thereby meet their requirements pursuant to CESA or the certification authority of the Energy Commission. The definition of eligible projects, for purposes of these provisions and fees, is limited to certain solar thermal powerplants and photovoltaic powerplants

proposed to be constructed in the planning area subject to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

This bill would expand the definition of eligible projects to include wind and geothermal powerplants proposed to be constructed in the planning area subject to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. By expanding the purposes for which moneys in this continuously appropriated fund may be used, this bill would make an appropriation.

(3) The Natural Community Conservation Planning Act authorizes the Department of Fish and Game to enter into agreements with any person or public entity for the purpose of preparing a natural community conservation plan, in cooperation with a local agency that has land use permit authority over the activities proposed to be addressed in the plan, to provide comprehensive management and conservation of multiple wildlife species.

This bill would require the department to enter into one or more planning agreements with appropriate plan participants, including, but not limited to, the Energy Commission, one or more counties within the San Joaquin Valley, as defined, and other persons or public entities for the purpose of preparing one or more natural community conservation plans, if certain conditions are met with regard to the plan and the parties to the planning agreement.

~~(4) The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency, as defined, to prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify the completion of, an environmental impact report (EIR) on a project that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant effect on the environment or to adopt a negative declaration if it finds that the project will not have that effect. CEQA also requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment.~~

~~This bill, until January 1, 2014, would not require an EIR to analyze, or mitigate, where feasible, the environmental effect for an eligible renewable energy resource, including greenhouse gas emissions, not found to be significant under CEQA.~~

~~The bill would authorize an applicant for a project to construct an eligible renewable energy resource that has an approved electricity purchase agreement to provide information to the lead agency regarding the environmental benefits of the project when comments may be~~

~~received by the lead agency on a draft environmental impact report or negative declaration. The bill would authorize the lead agency to consider this information when making a finding under CEQA. The bill would repeal these provisions on January 1, 2014.~~

~~(5)~~

(4) The Warren-Alquist State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Act establishes the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (Energy Commission), and requires it to certify sufficient sites and related facilities that are required to provide a supply of electricity sufficient to accommodate projected demand for power statewide. The act grants the Energy Commission the exclusive authority to certify any stationary or floating electrical generating facility using any source of thermal energy, with a generating capacity of 50 megawatts or more, and any facilities appurtenant thereto.

Existing law requires the Energy Commission to establish a process for certain applicants for certification of a solar thermal powerplant that is proposed to be constructed in the planning area subject to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, as defined, that allows the applicant to elect to pay additional fees to be used by the Energy Commission to contract with 3rd parties to assist the Energy Commission staff in performing the analysis otherwise performed by staff in determining whether or not to issue a certification.

This bill would expand this process to include any applicant for certification of an eligible renewable energy resource.

The bill would require the Energy Commission, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to provide \$7,000,000 in grants to qualified counties for the development or revision of rules and policies, including general plan elements, zoning ordinances, and a natural community conservation plan as a plan participant, to facilitate the development of eligible renewable energy resources, and their associated electric transmission facilities, on disturbed lands, as defined. The bill would require a general plan element or zoning ordinance that is adopted or revised pursuant to a grant to be completed within 2 years of receipt of the grant and be consistent with the conservation strategies of any natural community conservation plan, if one had been approved or is under development in the county.

~~(6)~~

(5) This bill would provide that it would be operative only if ~~an unspecified bill~~ *SB 2 of the 2011–12 First Extraordinary Session* is enacted and becomes effective on or before January 1, 2012.

(7)

(6) The California Constitution authorizes the Governor to declare a fiscal emergency and to call the Legislature into special session for that purpose. Governor Schwarzenegger issued a proclamation declaring a fiscal emergency, and calling a special session for this purpose, on December 6, 2010. Governor Brown issued a proclamation on January 20, 2011, declaring and reaffirming that a fiscal emergency exists and stating that his proclamation supersedes the earlier proclamation for purposes of that constitutional provision.

This bill would state that it addresses the fiscal emergency declared and reaffirmed by the Governor by proclamation issued on January 20, 2011, pursuant to the California Constitution.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 2069 of the Fish and Game Code is
2 amended to read:

3 2069. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms
4 have the following meanings:

5 (1) “Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan” means the
6 completed conservation plan in the Mojave and Colorado Desert
7 regions adopted pursuant to the Natural Community Conservation
8 Planning Act (Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 2800)), and
9 covers the geographical area described in Section 4 of, and depicted
10 in Exhibit A to, the “Draft Planning Agreement by and among
11 California Department of Fish and Game, California Energy
12 Commission, United States Bureau of Land Management, and
13 United States Fish and Wildlife Service for the Desert Renewable
14 Energy Conservation Plan,” document REAT-1000-2009-034,
15 dated October 2009.

16 (2) “Energy Commission” means the State Energy Resources
17 Conservation and Development Commission.

18 (b) The department, in consultation with the Energy Commission
19 and, to the extent practicable, the United States Fish and Wildlife
20 Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management, may
21 design and implement actions, including the purchase of land and
22 conservation easements, to protect, restore, or enhance the habitat
23 of plants and wildlife that can be used to fully mitigate the impacts

1 of the take of endangered species, threatened species, or candidate
2 species, for purposes of paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section
3 2081 and Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 25500) of Division
4 15 of the Public Resources Code, resulting from solar thermal,
5 photovoltaic, wind, and geothermal powerplants in the Desert
6 Renewable Energy Conservation Plan planning area that meet each
7 of the following requirements:

8 (1) Either the Energy Commission determines that the
9 application for certification was complete by February 1, ~~2010~~
10 *2011*, or the local government in which the project is located has
11 determined the project permit application is complete or has issued
12 a notice of preparation of an environmental impact statement
13 pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the
14 Public Resources Code by February 1, ~~2010~~ *2011*.

15 (2) The developer or owner of the proposed powerplant or
16 generation facility has applied for, and would qualify for, funding
17 under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of
18 2009 (Public Law 111-5). For purposes of this paragraph,
19 “funding” means a loan guarantee made pursuant to Section 406
20 of the act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 16516) or a grant for specified energy
21 property in lieu of a tax credit provided pursuant to Section 1603
22 of Division B of the act, which division is titled the American
23 Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009.

24 (c) A mitigation action may only be used for the mitigation
25 purposes described in subdivision (b) if it meets one of the
26 following conditions:

27 (1) The department has implemented the mitigation action and
28 determined that the action has resulted in the protection, restoration,
29 or enhancement of the habitat of one or more species that are
30 proposed to be covered by the Desert Renewable Energy
31 Conservation Plan, and that are located in the planning area, and,
32 based upon that determination, can be used, for purposes of
33 paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 2081, to fully mitigate
34 the impacts of the take of the species from one or more projects
35 identified in subdivision (b).

36 (2) The mitigation action is included in an interim mitigation
37 strategy for projects identified in subdivision (b). An interim
38 mitigation strategy pursuant to this paragraph shall be developed
39 by the department, in consultation with the Energy Commission
40 and, to the extent practicable, the United States Fish and Wildlife

1 Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management, and
2 shall include all of the following:

3 (A) A description of specific mitigation areas and specific
4 actions on public or private land within the Desert Renewable
5 Energy Conservation Plan planning area that are to be
6 implemented, including a focus on habitat preservation, while also
7 including enhancement or restoration actions that will do all of the
8 following:

9 (i) Contribute to the conservation of each candidate species,
10 threatened species, or endangered species for which a permit is
11 issued.

12 (ii) Adopt a regional planning perspective that provides a
13 foundation for, or that will complement, any conservation strategy
14 to be developed for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation
15 Plan.

16 (iii) Implement mitigation actions within a reasonable period
17 of time relative to the impact to the affected candidate species,
18 threatened species, or endangered species, including, where
19 feasible, advance mitigation. For purposes of this clause, “advance
20 mitigation” means mitigation implemented before, and in
21 anticipation of, future impacts to natural resources.

22 (iv) Include a description of the species that would be benefited
23 by each mitigation action and how it would be benefited.

24 (B) A cost estimate for each action, whether on public or private
25 land, using total cost accounting, including, as applicable, land
26 acquisition costs, conservation easement costs, monitoring costs,
27 transaction costs, restoration costs, the amount of a nonwasting
28 endowment account for land management or easement stewardship
29 costs by the department or other management entity, and
30 administrative costs.

31 (d) The interim mitigation strategy shall be based on best
32 available science and shall be reviewed by the Desert Renewable
33 Energy Conservation Plan independent science advisors. The
34 department shall seek and consider comments from the Desert
35 Renewable Energy Conservation Plan independent science advisors
36 in the design and location of each mitigation action implemented
37 pursuant to this section. If the department elects to not incorporate
38 comments of the independent science advisors into mitigation
39 actions, the department shall explain the reasons for that decision
40 in writing.

(e) The interim mitigation strategy shall be completed by the department no later than 60 days following the operative date of the act adding this section.

(f) (1) This section does not modify the requirements of Section 2081, including the requirement to avoid and minimize impacts, where feasible, or the requirements of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of, or Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 25500) of Division 15 of, the Public Resources Code, or affect the existing authority of the department to authorize mitigation actions to comply with this chapter.

(2) With respect to the Energy Commission, in the case of an applicant seeking certification for a solar thermal ~~power plant~~ *or geothermal powerplant* pursuant to Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 25500) of Division 15 of the Public Resources Code, or a lead agency, as defined in Section 21067 of the Public Resources Code, in the case of an applicant seeking approval of a ~~photovoltaic, wind, or geothermal powerplant~~ *renewable energy powerplant not subject to the Energy Commission's jurisdiction*, the sole effect of a mitigation action described in subdivision (c), and paid for through the deposit of fees as described in Section 2099, is to relieve an applicant of the obligation to directly take actions that are taken instead by the department or its contractor or designee pursuant to subdivision (b) to meet the applicant's obligations with respect to the powerplant's impacts to species and habitat. The mitigation action and deposit of fees shall not relieve the applicant of any other obligation, or the Energy Commission or the lead agency of any of its existing requirements of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of, or the requirements of Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 25500) of Division 15 of, the Public Resources Code to analyze, avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to species and habitat, or make the findings required by those statutes.

(g) The mitigation actions implemented pursuant to this section shall be incorporated into the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan upon the finalization of the plan, to the extent the mitigation actions are consistent with the plan's conservation strategy.

SEC. 2. Section 2099 of the Fish and Game Code is amended to read:

2099. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) “Eligible project” means a solar thermal powerplant, photovoltaic powerplant, wind powerplant, or geothermal powerplant meeting the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 2069.

(2) “Energy Commission” means the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission.

(b) (1) The Renewable Energy Resources Development Fee Trust Fund is hereby established in the State Treasury. The department shall collect a fee from the owner or developer of an eligible project that elects to use mitigation actions developed and approved by the department pursuant to Section 2069, and all moneys received for purposes of mitigation actions pursuant to Section 2069 shall be deposited in the fund and shall be held in trust and be expended solely for the purposes of, and in conformity with, that section, applicable permit or certification requirements for eligible projects, and any contractual agreement between the Energy Commission or department and the owner or developer of an eligible project. The department may contract with, or award grants to, third parties to implement mitigation actions in conformity with Section 2069 and this section.

(2) Upon direction by the department, the Controller shall create any accounts or subaccounts within the fund that the department determines are necessary or convenient to facilitate management of the fund.

(3) The fund shall serve, and be managed, as an optional, voluntary method for developers or owners of eligible projects to deposit fees to complete mitigation actions meeting the conditions of subdivision (c) of Section 2069 and for the purpose of meeting the requirements of this chapter or the requirements of Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 25500) of Division 15 of the Public Resources Code. Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, the money in the fund is hereby continuously appropriated to the department, without regard to fiscal years, for the purposes enumerated in this section and Section 2069. An expenditure shall not be made from the fund except as authorized by the department.

(4) The sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) is hereby transferred, as a loan, from the Renewable Resource Trust Fund

1 to the fund. This loan shall be repaid from the fund to the
2 Renewable Resource Trust Fund no later than December 31, 2012.
3 The department shall use these funds, pursuant to paragraph (1)
4 of subdivision (c) of Section 2069, to purchase mitigation lands
5 or conservation easements, and to cover related restoration,
6 monitoring, and transaction costs incurred in advance of the receipt
7 of fees pursuant to paragraph (5) and to cover the department's
8 administrative costs for the program.

9 (5) A developer or owner of an eligible project that elects to
10 use mitigation actions developed and authorized by the department
11 pursuant to Section 2069 shall remit fees to the department for
12 deposit into the fund for those mitigation actions in an amount that
13 reflects the determination by the Energy Commission, with respect
14 to a solar thermal ~~powerplant~~ or *geothermal powerplant subject*
15 *to its jurisdiction*, or the department, with respect to ~~a solar~~
16 ~~photovoltaic powerplant, wind powerplant, or geothermal~~
17 ~~powerplant~~ *a renewable energy powerplant not subject to the*
18 *Energy Commission's jurisdiction*, of the costs attributable to the
19 mitigation actions that meet the standards of this chapter. The
20 amount of fees to be paid by a developer or owner of an eligible
21 project to meet the standards of this chapter shall be calculated on
22 a per acre basis, using total cost accounting, and shall include, as
23 applicable, land acquisition or conservation easement costs,
24 monitoring costs, restoration costs, transaction costs, the amount
25 of a nonwasting endowment account for land management or
26 easement stewardship costs by the department or other management
27 entity, and administrative costs and funds sufficient to repay any
28 expenditure of state funds made pursuant to paragraph (4). To
29 ensure the funds deposited pursuant to this section are sufficient
30 to meet the standards of this chapter, the project developer or
31 owner, in addition to payment of those funds, shall provide
32 security, in a form and amount, not to exceed 5 percent of the
33 amount of the funds, excluding any portion of the funds to be used
34 for a nonwasting endowment, to be determined by the Energy
35 Commission, with respect to a solar thermal ~~powerplant~~ or
36 *geothermal powerplant subject to its jurisdiction*, or to be
37 determined by the department, with respect to ~~a solar photovoltaic~~
38 ~~powerplant, wind powerplant, or geothermal powerplant~~ *to a*
39 *renewable energy powerplant not subject to the Energy*
40 *Commission's jurisdiction.*

(c) The department shall monitor the implementation of the mitigation actions and the progress of the construction of the eligible projects. The department shall report all deposits, and the source of those deposits, on its Internet Web site. The department shall also report all expenditures from the fund on its Internet Web site and identify the mitigation activities or programs that each expenditure funded and its relationship to the permitted project. The Energy Commission, with respect to a solar thermal powerplant, and the department, with respect to a solar photovoltaic powerplant, wind powerplant, or geothermal powerplant, shall or geothermal powerplant subject to its jurisdiction, and the department, with respect to a renewable energy powerplant not subject to the Energy Commission's jurisdiction, shall ensure that moneys paid pursuant to this section are used only for purposes of satisfying the standards of paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 2081. Where moneys are used to fund mitigation actions, including the acquisition of lands or conservation easements, or the restoration of lands, that use shall be in addition to, and not duplicative of, mitigation obtained through any other means.

(d) The department and the Energy Commission shall not allow any use of the interim mitigation strategy subsequent to a determination by the department that the time and extent of mitigation actions are not being implemented in rough proportion to the impacts of those projects. The department shall reinstitute the use of the interim mitigation strategy when the department determines the rough proportionality between mitigation actions and impacts of eligible projects has been reestablished by the completion of additional mitigation actions.

SEC. 3. Section 2099.10 is added to the Fish and Game Code, to read:

2099.10. (a) The department shall collect a permit application fee from the owner or developer of an eligible project to support its permitting of eligible projects pursuant to this chapter. ~~The~~ Except as provided in subdivision (c), the owner or developer of a proposed eligible project shall pay a one-time permit application fee of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) to the department. For purposes of this section, an "eligible project" means an eligible renewable energy resource as defined in the California renewables portfolio standard program (Article 16 (commencing with Section

1 399.11) of Chapter 2.3 of Part 1 of Division 1 of the Public Utilities
2 Code).

3 (b) The department shall collect the permit application fee, at
4 the time the owner or developer submits its permit application or,
5 for eligible projects for which an application has already been
6 submitted, on or before January 30, 2012. The department shall
7 utilize the permit application fee to pay for all or a portion of the
8 department's cost of processing incidental take permit applications
9 pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 2081 and Section 2080.1.
10 If the permit application fee is insufficient to complete permitting
11 work due to the complexity of a project or timeline delays, the
12 department may collect an additional fee from the owner or
13 developer to pay for its actual costs, not to exceed an additional
14 seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000).

15 (c) *Notwithstanding subdivisions (a) and (b), if the department's*
16 *cost of processing an incidental take permit application is limited*
17 *to activities pursuant to Section 2080.1, the department shall*
18 *collect a fee from the owner or developer of an eligible project in*
19 *an amount that does not exceed the anticipated full costs to the*
20 *department for those activities.*

21 ~~(e)~~

22 (d) For an eligible project seeking site certification, pursuant to
23 Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 25500) of Division 1 of the
24 Public Resources Code, by the Energy Commission, the owner or
25 developer shall pay the permit application fee directly to the
26 department. The permit application fee paid to the department shall
27 fund the department's participation in the Energy Commission's
28 site certification process as the state's trustee for natural resources.
29 The permit application fee shall be in addition to any application
30 fees collected by the Energy Commission. The permit application
31 fee shall be due and payable within 30 days of the operative date
32 of this section. As used in this subdivision, "Energy Commission"
33 has the same meaning as defined in Section 2099.

34 ~~(d)~~

35 (e) The permit application fees paid pursuant to this section
36 shall be proportional to the cost incurred by the department, and
37 shall be annually reviewed and adjustments recommended to the
38 Legislature in an amount necessary to pay the full costs of
39 department programs as specified. The fees shall be deposited in
40 the Fish and Game Preservation Fund, and shall be eligible for

1 expenditure by the department pursuant to subdivision (b) of
2 Section 2081 and Section 2080.1.

3 (e)

4 (f) If an owner or developer withdraws a project within 30 days
5 after paying the permit application fee, the department shall refund
6 any unused portion of the fee to the owner or developer.

7 SEC. 4. Section 2840 is added to the Fish and Game Code, to
8 read:

9 2840. (a) Consistent with this chapter and to the extent
10 practicable, the department shall enter into one or more planning
11 agreements with appropriate plan participants, including, but not
12 limited to, the State Energy Resources Conservation and
13 Development Commission (Energy Commission), one or more
14 counties within the San Joaquin Valley, and other persons or public
15 entities for the purpose of preparing one or more natural community
16 conservation plans, if all of the following conditions are met:

17 (1) The plan meets all the requirements of this chapter and
18 appropriate financial assurances for adequate funding for those
19 plans, as required by this chapter, are provided to the department.

20 (2) The parties to the planning agreement include both of the
21 following:

22 (A) One or more local agencies with land use permit authority
23 sufficient to allow for comprehensive management and
24 conservation of multiple wildlife species.

25 (B) One or more parties that are renewable energy developers
26 proposing to construct, in total, at least 2,000 megawatts of eligible
27 renewable energy resources, as defined in the California renewables
28 portfolio standard program (Article 16 (commencing with Section
29 399.11) of Chapter 2.3 of Part 1 of Division 1 of the Public Utilities
30 Code).

31 (b) "San Joaquin Valley," for purposes of this section, means
32 lands within the Counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced,
33 San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare, as determined by each county
34 in consultation with the department.

35 ~~SEC. 5. Section 21081.8 is added to the Public Resources Code,~~
36 ~~to read:~~

37 ~~21081.8. (a) If an environmental effect for an eligible~~
38 ~~renewable energy resource, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section~~
39 ~~399.12 of the Public Utilities Code, is found not to be significant~~
40 ~~pursuant to this division, the environmental impact report for the~~

1 resource shall not be required to analyze, or mitigate where
2 feasible, that environmental effect, including, but not limited to,
3 greenhouse gas emissions.

4 (b) An environmental impact report for an eligible renewable
5 resource shall contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons
6 the potentially significant effects of a project were determined not
7 to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the
8 environmental impact report.

9 (c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1,
10 2014, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute,
11 that is enacted before January 1, 2014, deletes or extends that date.

12 SEC. 6. Section 21097.6 is added to the Public Resources Code,
13 to read:

14 21097.6. (a) An applicant for a project to construct an eligible
15 renewable energy resource, as defined in the California renewables
16 portfolio standard program (Article 16 (commencing with Section
17 399.11) of Chapter 2.3 of Part 1 of Division 1 of the Public Utilities
18 Code), that has an electricity purchase agreement that has been
19 approved by the Public Utilities Commission or a local publicly
20 owned utility may provide information to the lead agency regarding
21 the environmental benefits of the project when comments may be
22 received by the lead agency on a draft environmental impact report
23 or negative declaration, as specified in the notice required pursuant
24 to Section 21092. The lead agency, in making a finding pursuant
25 to Section 21081, may consider information submitted pursuant
26 to this division.

27 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, this section
28 does not interfere with or prevent the existing authority of an
29 agency or department to carry out its programs, projects, or
30 responsibilities to identify, review, approve, deny, or implement
31 any mitigation requirements, and this section shall not be construed
32 as a limitation on mitigation requirements for the project, or a
33 limitation on compliance with requirements under this division or
34 any other provision of law.

35 (c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1,
36 2014, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute,
37 that is enacted before January 1, 2014, deletes or extends that date.

38 SEC. 7.

39 SEC. 5. Section 25524 of the Public Resources Code is
40 amended to read:

1 25524. (a) “Qualified applicant” for purposes of this section
2 means an applicant for certification of
3 an eligible renewable energy resource, as defined in the
4 California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program (Article 16
5 (commencing with Section 399.11) of Chapter 2.3 of Part 1 of
6 Division 1 of the Public Utilities Code).

7 (b) The commission shall establish a process to allow a qualified
8 applicant to elect to pay additional fees to be used by the
9 commission to contract with a third party, or more than one third
10 party, to assist commission staff in performing the analysis
11 otherwise performed by commission staff in determining whether
12 or not to issue a certification. The commission shall retain
13 discretion as to when this option will be offered to a qualified
14 applicant.

15 (c) The amount of the fees charged by the commission pursuant
16 to this section shall be conditioned upon the qualified applicant
17 agreeing to that amount and electing to proceed with the retention
18 of the third party or parties pursuant to subdivision (b).

19 (d) All fees paid by a qualified applicant shall be used
20 exclusively for analysis of that applicant’s application for
21 certification.

22 ~~SEC. 8.~~

23 *SEC. 6.* Section 25619 is added to the Public Resources Code,
24 to read:

25 25619. (a) For purposes of this section, the following
26 definitions shall apply:

27 (1) “Disturbed lands” means lands that have been mechanically
28 disturbed, including lands that have been converted from native
29 vegetation through plowing, bulldozing, or other mechanical means
30 in support of activities that change the land cover, including, but
31 not limited to, agriculture, mining, and clearance for development
32 purposes. These lands, based on appropriate biological surveys,
33 may also have diminished value as habitat for mitigation purposes
34 for endangered, threatened, candidate, and other sensitive species.

35 (2) “Qualified counties” means the Counties of Fresno, Imperial,
36 Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Merced, Riverside, San
37 Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare.

38 (b) The commission shall provide, upon appropriation by the
39 Legislature, up to seven million dollars (\$7,000,000) in grants to
40 qualified counties for the development or revision of rules and

1 policies, including general plan elements, zoning ordinances, and
 2 a natural community conservation plan as a plan participant, that
 3 facilitate the development of eligible renewable energy resources,
 4 and their associated electric transmission facilities, on disturbed
 5 lands. A general plan element or zoning ordinance that is adopted
 6 or revised pursuant to this section shall be completed within two
 7 years of receipt of the grant and shall be consistent with the
 8 conservation strategies of any natural community conservation
 9 plan, if one had been approved or is under development in the
 10 county, pursuant to the Natural Community Conservation Planning
 11 Act (Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 2800) of Division 3
 12 of the Fish and Game Code).

13 ~~SEC. 9.~~

14 *SEC. 7.* This bill shall become operative only if _____ Bill
 15 ~~—~~ *Senate Bill 2* of the 2011–12 First Extraordinary Session is
 16 enacted and becomes effective on or before January 1, 2012.

17 ~~SEC. 10.~~

18 *SEC. 8.* This act addresses the fiscal emergency declared and
 19 reaffirmed by the Governor by proclamation on January 20, 2011,
 20 pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 10 of Article IV of the
 21 California Constitution.

22
 23
 24 **CORRECTIONS:** _____

25 **Text—Pages 10 and 16.**
 26 _____

O